

Learning English with CBC Calgary

Weekly Newscast

March 14th, 2014

Lessons prepared by Barbara Edmondson, Kim Chaba-Armstrong & Justine Light

Objectives of the weekly newscast lesson

- to develop listening skills at the CLB 4 level
- to increase vocabulary among learners
- to increase knowledge of news stories
- to provide a self-study tool, as well as an ESL classroom resource



www.alberta.ca



<http://www.cbc.ca/calgary/learning-english/>

News Story #1

Before you listen to the first news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Use one of the vocabulary words below to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

announced (say publicly)	memorial (funeral service)	apologize (to say sorry)
conference (meeting)	legislature (government building)	reporter (a news worker)
refuse (say no to a request)	pay back (return money)	demand (strong request)

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

under fire – being verbally attacked or accused of doing something wrong; being questioned

1. In the winter, you can go skating in front of the Alberta _____ in Edmonton.
2. If you hurt someone, you should always _____.
3. I have no problem lending my sister money, because she always _____ me _____.
4. If my brother asks to borrow money, I usually _____ because he always forgets to return the money.
5. A _____ for CBC interviewed a witness about the accident.
6. The teacher _____ to the class that there would be no school tomorrow.
7. Most schools have parent-teacher _____ to discuss each child's progress.
8. After my grandmother died, we had a _____ at the church she attended.
9. It is better to ask politely than to _____ something.

Now listen to the first news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Multiple Choice

Choose the best answer to complete the sentences. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. Premier Alison Redford spent _____ of tax payers' money to go to Nelson Mandela's memorial.	a) \$45,000 b) \$4,500
2. Premier Redford now _____ the money she spent on the trip to South Africa.	a) refused to return b) has paid back
3. On Wednesday, Redford apologized at a _____ at the legislature.	a) question period b) news conference
4. Premier Redford has been under fire for _____ ever since the cost of the trip was made public.	a) her travel expenses b) spending habits
5. Up until Wednesday, Redford _____ to pay back the costs for the trip to South Africa.	a) had refused b) had planned
6. Redford said her trip to South Africa was _____.	a) government business. b) an important trip.

Discussion Question

Do you think that political leaders need to be very careful about how they spend money?

Do you think the Premier was wrong to spend this much money on the trip?

News Story #2

Before you listen to the second news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Choose the group of synonyms (words with similar meaning) that best match each of the vocabulary words. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
	1) mysterious	a) customer traveler
	2) disappearance	b) disappear be lost
	3) continue	c) hint evidence
	4) passenger	d) carry on keep going
	5) crew	e) strange puzzling
	6) vanish	f) loss isn't found
	7) trace	g) workers employees

Now listen to the second news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: True/False

Decide whether the statements below are **True** or **False**. Write your answer in the blanks. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. ____ Last weekend, a Chinese Airline flight disappeared.
2. ____ Two hundred thirty nine people were on the airplane.
3. ____ Two Canadians were among those passengers who vanished.
4. ____ The airplane was a Boeing 7-70.
5. ____ The plane was going to Kuala Lumpur from Beijing.
6. ____ Most of the people on board were Chinese.
7. ____ There is some evidence of where the plane may be.

Discussion Questions

What do you think happened to Flight 370? Does this airplane disappearance make you more afraid to travel by plane? Why or why not?

News Story #3

Before you listen to the third news story, complete this vocabulary activity. It will help you to understand the listening more easily.

Vocabulary

Match the words with their definitions. *Answers are in the appendix.*

Answer	Word	Definition
	1. investigating	a) put pictures, videos or writing onto an online website
	2. disturbing	b) makes fun of or laughs at someone
	3. mocks	c) looking into something to find out the truth
	4. vulnerable	d) upsetting or causing people to worry
	5. posting	e) checking on something over period of time
	6. humiliating	f) easily hurt or attacked
	7. monitoring	g) causing someone to make someone feel stupid or ashamed

Extra definitions to help you understand the listening:

Charges can be laid – when the police officially say someone may have done a criminal act

Now listen to the third news story from the audio file.

Listening Activity: Short Answer

Read and answer the questions below. *Answers are in the appendix.*

1. Which social media site is being used by the group mocking homeless people in Calgary?
2. What is the name of this group??
3. What kinds of materials do they post online??
4. What do the Calgary police say about the website?
5. What future actions are the police thinking of taking?

Discussion Questions

What can we do to protect vulnerable people in society?

Language Focus

Identifying verb tenses and their use

Present Perfect

- We use this verb tense to describe an action that happened in the past, but no definite time is known, or the time is not important.
- We also use this tense if an event began in the past and still continues today.

Forming the present perfect: has or have + past participle

How to form the past participle:

Past Participle = regular verb + 'ed' ending

= irregular verbs (we need to memorize their forms)

Fill out the chart with the past participle forms of the verbs. Use a dictionary to help you.

write	
teach	
have	
'be'	
tell	
come	
bring	

cut	
say	
forget	
understand	
do	
drink	
speak	

Let's look at examples from the first news story:

1. Premier Alison Redford **has announced** she **has paid** back the \$45,000 cost of her trip to South Africa for Nelson Mandela's memorial.

- We do not know exactly when Premier Redford made this announcement or when she paid back the money. We only know this happened some time before the time of writing (in the past.)

2. Redford **has been** under fire for her travel expenses ever since the cost of the trip was made public.

- In this example, Premier Redford started to be questioned about her travel expenses when the cost of the trip was made public, and this pressure still continues today.

Look for examples in the other two news stories also.

Transcripts of Weekly News Stories

	MARCH 14 TH WEEKLY NEWS STORIES	TIME
Introduction	Hi, I'm Carla Beynon and this is Learning English for March 14 th .	0:00
Story 1	Premier Alison Redford has announced she has paid back the \$45,000 cost of her trip to South Africa for Nelson Mandela's memorial. Redford apologized Wednesday afternoon during a news conference at the legislature, where she took no questions from reporters. Redford has been under fire for her travel expenses ever since the cost of the trip was made public. Up until Wednesday, Redford had refused to pay back the costs, despite many demands to do so by opposition politicians, because she said she was travelling on government business.	0:08
Story 2	The search continues after the mysterious disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 last weekend. Two hundred thirty nine passengers and crew were on board, including two Canadians. The Boeing 7-77 was on its way from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing when it vanished. Most of the people on the plane were Chinese. No trace of the plane has been seen but on Wednesday China's official news agency said that a government website has images of debris thought to be from the missing jet.	0:52
Story 3	Calgary police say they're investigating a disturbing new Facebook group that mocks some of our city's most vulnerable people. Members of a new Calgary based Facebook group called Creature Sightings do just that though - posting humiliating pictures and videos of people who live on the streets. One video shows a member of the group throwing garbage on a homeless man who is reading a book on a bench. Tim Richter speaks for the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. He says the page is plain and simple bullying. Calgary police say it could be illegal. They are monitoring the site to see if any laws are being broken, and charges can be laid against the people behind it.	1:30

Appendix: Answer keys

News story 1

Vocabulary

1. In the winter, you can go skating in front of the Alberta legislature in Edmonton.
2. If you hurt someone, you should always apologize.
3. I have no problem lending my sister money, because she always pays me back.
4. If my brother asks to borrow money, I usually refuse because he always forgets to return the money.
5. A reporter for CBC interviewed a witness about the accident.
6. The teacher announced to the class that there would be no school tomorrow.
7. Most schools have parent-teacher conferences to discuss each child's progress.
8. After my grandmother died, we had a memorial at the church she attended.
9. It is better to ask politely than to demand something.

Listening

1. Premier Alison Redford spent _____ of tax payers' money to go to Nelson Mandela's memorial.	a) \$45,000 b) \$4,500
2. Premier Redford now _____ the money she spent on the trip to South Africa.	a) refused to return b) has paid back
3. On Wednesday, Redford apologized at a _____ at the legislature.	a) question period b) news conference
4. Premier Redford has been under fire for _____ ever since the cost of the trip was made public.	a) her travel expenses b) spending habits
5. Up until Wednesday, Redford _____ to pay back the costs for the trip to South Africa.	a) had refused b) had planned
6. Redford said her trip to South Africa was _____.	a) government business. b) an important trip.

News story 2

Vocabulary

Answer	Word from the story	Related words
e	1) mysterious	a) customer traveler
f	2) disappearance	b) disappear be lost
d	3) continue	c) hint evidence
a	4) passenger	d) carry on keep going
g	5) crew	e) strange puzzling

b	6) vanish	f) loss isn't found
c	7) trace	g) workers employees

Listening

1. F Last weekend, a Chinese Airlines flight disappeared.
2. T Two hundred thirty nine people were on the airplane.
3. T Two Canadians were among those passengers who vanished.
4. F The airplane was a Boeing 7-70.
5. F The plane was going to Kuala Lumpur from Beijing.
6. T Most of the people on board were Chinese.
7. F There is some evidence of where the plane may be.

News story 3

Vocabulary

Answer	Word	Definition
c	1. investigating	a. put pictures, videos or writing onto an online website
d	2. disturbing	b. makes fun of or laughs at someone
b	3. mocks	c. looking into something to find out the truth
f	4. vulnerable	d. upsetting or causing people to worry
a	5. posting	e. checking on something over period of time
g	6. humiliating	f. easily hurt or attacked
e	7. monitoring	g. causing someone to make someone feel stupid or ashamed

Listening

1. Which social media site is being used by the group mocking homeless people in Calgary? The group is using Facebook.
2. What is the name of this group? The group is called "Creature Sightings."
3. What kinds of materials do they post online? Humiliating pictures and videos.
4. What do the Calgary police say about the website? They say it could be illegal.
5. What future actions are the police thinking of taking? They are monitoring the site to see if laws are broken and charges could be laid.

Language Focus

write	written
teach	taught
have	had
'be'	been
tell	told
come	come
bring	brought

cut	cut
say	said
forget	forgotten
understand	understood
do	done
drink	drunk
speak	spoken